

Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project

Social and Economic Report

Prepared by:

Mike Martin,
Public Service Team Leader

for:

Chippewa National Forest

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Methodology for Analysis.....	4
Existing Condition.....	4
Social Assessment	4
Economic Assessment.....	7
Desired Condition.....	11
Objectives	11
Overview of the Proposed Action	11
Mitigation	12
Monitoring.....	12
Environmental Consequences	13
Alternative 1 - No Action	13
Alternative 2 - Proposed Action.....	14
Alternative 3	14
Alternative 4.....	15
Cumulative Effects for all Alternatives.....	15
Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction	18

Introduction

The Social and Economic Report was prepared in response to issues raised during public scoping for the Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project. Through scoping of the proposed action seven issues were identified, two of which are associated with the social and economic aspects of the project. They are discussed as follows.

Issue 1: Provide more connections for loop and longer day recreation experiences.

Many people expressed a desire to have more roads open to ORV use that are connected to each other for longer day riding opportunities and to create loops. Having longer riding opportunities and loops available can reduce the ORV hauling required and provide more recreation opportunities and different types of riding experiences in a centralized area. People also expressed a belief that providing loops and longer day experiences would bring an economic benefit to surrounding communities.

In response to the expressed belief that providing loops and longer day riding opportunities may bring an economic benefit to local communities, roads near the communities of Remer, Big Fork, and Lake Winnibigoshish area on the forest, and roads connecting communities are the focus in addressing this issue. An estimate of miles of Forest Service System roads open to ORV use that are connected to each and greater than 5.0 miles in length were developed through Geographic Information System analysis (GIS). The Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan (G-RMV-1) generally prohibits ORV use on Objective Maintenance Level (OML) 3, 4, and 5 roads. Currently, there are 468 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads that would not be open for ORV use. However, the Forest Service is conducting a mixed use analysis to evaluate which OML 3, 4, and 5 roads may be proposed open to ORV use.

Indicator: Miles of Forest Service System roads open to ORV use that are connected to each other and greater than 5.0 miles in length, and miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads open to ORV use.

Issue 7: Road Operations and Maintenance Funding

The Chippewa National Forest (CNF) receives a finite allocation of Federal funds to operate and maintain roads. Many people expressed a belief that the amount of funding the forest receives has decreased in the recent past and that there will not be enough funding available to manage the road system to required standards. One area of concern mentioned frequently is law enforcement, particularly if funding would be sufficient to adequately patrol roads, issue citations to people riding illegally, and therefore protect resources. Another concern involves whether or not enough funding would be available to maintain the roadways and stream crossings, and provide brushing and clearing to insure environmental protection and public safety.

Indicator: Projected National Forest System road annual maintenance costs, and projected Forest Service ORV law enforcement costs.

In addition to the two issues listed above, the designation of Forest Service System roads open to ORV use must be in compliance with Executive Order (EO) 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. For additional information regarding minorities and low income populations, please refer to the Environmental Justice specialist report.

In summary, two issues will be addressed in the social and economic report. The 2004 Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, and 2005 Travel Management Rule will guide the analysis.

Methodology for Analysis

Corporate GIS databases were used for gathering information and accessing effects for the social and economic report. Specifically, the Forest Service System roads GIS layer and some calculations by hand were used to identify miles of Forest Service System roads connected to each other that are greater than 5.0 miles in length, and areas managed for increased loops and connections of Forest Service System roads (Big Fork, Remer, and Lake Winnibigoshish areas). Through the mixed use analysis some OML 3, 4, and 5 roads will be proposed open for ORV use.

Projected costs for annual maintenance of Forest Service System roads (mowing, grading, brushing, and graveling) were developed through calculating averages based on previous years' road maintenance contracts. Projected costs for ORV law enforcement activities were developed through consultation with the Forest Service Law Enforcement Division.

Finally, information from the Chippewa National Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and supporting documents and the March 2006 All-Terrain Vehicle in Minnesota Economic Impact and Consumer Profile were used to support this analysis.

http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/chippewa/projects/forest_plan/index.php

<http://www.tourism.umn.edu/research/ATVExecutiveSummary.pdf>

Existing Condition

The affected environment for the social and economic assessment includes the CNF; three north-central Minnesota counties of Beltrami, Cass, and Itasca; Tribal communities and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) Reservation; associated communities, towns, and cities; and rural areas. People within these areas are affected by and are interested in National Forest management decisions that may effect ORV use on the Forest. The following section will address the existing social and economic conditions within the identified affected environment.

Social Assessment

The social assessment is tiered to the Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Social sustainability was analyzed in the FEIS and is included here by reference. Please refer to the FEIS for a complete discussion of the social assessment s (see link above: page 3.9-26 to 3.9-58).

To summarize the FEIS, visitors to the CNF participate in a variety of activities that utilize most of the Forest. Access to the National Forest plays a very important role for visitors and residents to pursue activities, although many people are not aware of which agency has jurisdiction of the roads in areas of intermixed ownership.

On the CNF there are approximately 2,528 miles of system roads. Table 1 shows system roads and there current status as open or closed for ORV use. Roads open seasonally are included in the total miles designated as open.

Table 1. Summary of Chippewa National Forest system roads open or closed for ORV use

Miles of Forest Service System Roads Open or Closed for ORV Use		
Open	Closed	Total
1,530	998	2,528

Demographic Trends

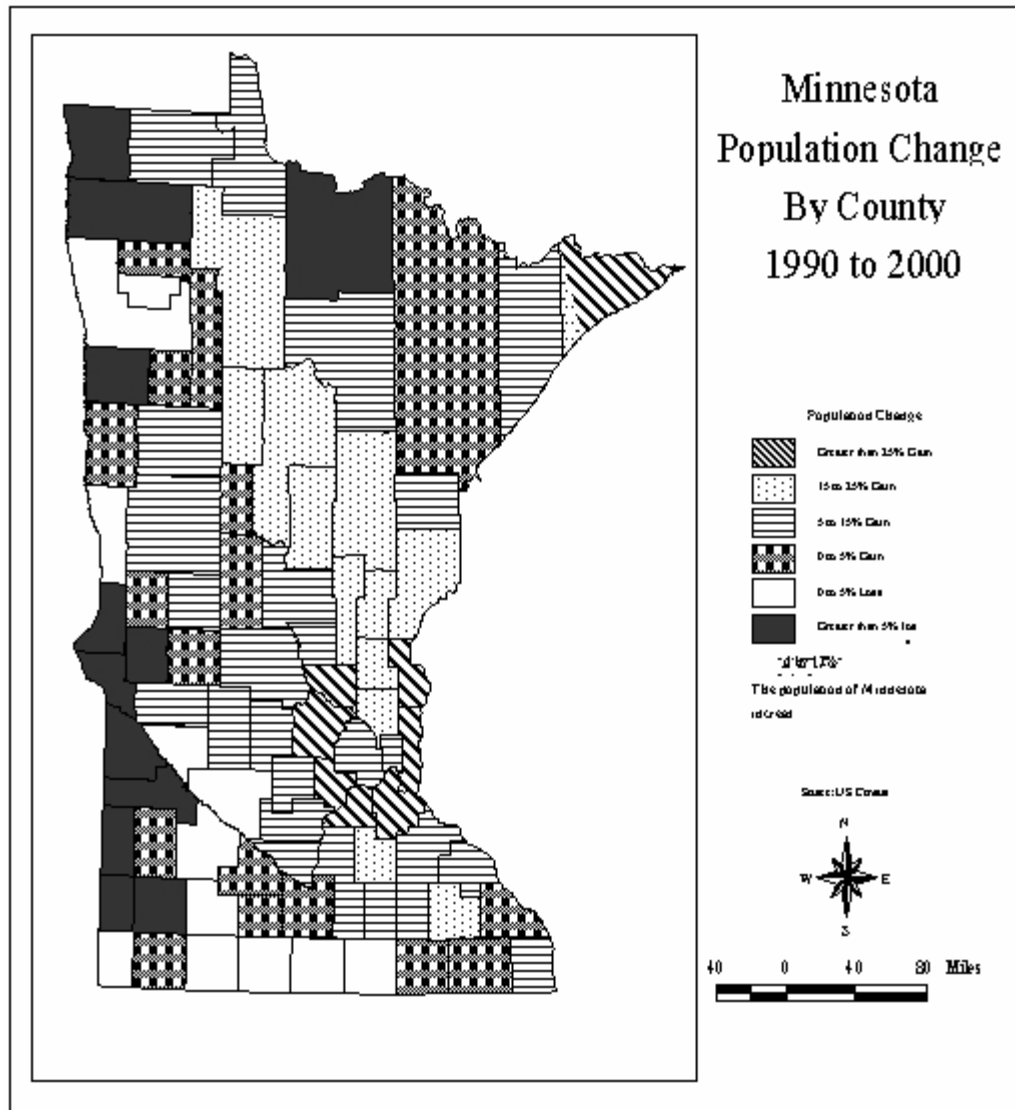
The social assessment completed for the FEIS addressed demographic trends within the affected environment. To summarize, the FEIS indicates that year-round residential populations have been increasing over the past 10 years (2 to 9 percent) (see Figure 1), and that north-central Minnesota is expected to see a 10 percent growth over the next 20 years. Additionally, population trends indicate that the future demographics of the area will show a slight increase of people in the age range of 1 to 64 years while the 65 plus age group will increase more than 45 to 67 percent over the next 20 years (Minnesota North-central Regional Landscape: Current Condition and Trends Assessment). Population surveys show the variety of racial and ethnic origins across the Forest (see Table 2). A complete discussion of demographic trends can be found in the FEIS (page 3.9-30 to 3.9-31).

Table 2. Racial and/or ethnic origin by counties associated with the Chippewa National Forest

Racial/Ethnic Origin	Chippewa National Forest Three County Area
White Alone	95,561
Black Alone	233
American Indian	12,678
Asian	421
Other	90
Two or More	728
Spanish Origin	(no data)

Source: Chippewa National Forest Social Assessment

Figure 1. Minnesota population change by county, 1990-2000 (Chippewa National Forest Social Assessment, page 4)



Minnesota ORV Rider Profile

According to the University of Minnesota study: *All-terrain Vehicles in Minnesota: Economic Impact and Consumer Profile*; the demographics of ORV riders in the state of Minnesota mirror the national demographics. The study states that, “The typical 2005 Minnesota ATV rider was a white male in his mid-forties with some college or technical schooling. The typical rider is most often full-time employed with an income greater than \$50,000 that supports a family with an average of 2.8 (page 6).” Furthermore, “The most important experience attributed among Minnesota ATV rider was ‘being with friends and family’, and ‘being in a natural area’, ‘relaxation’ and ‘getting away from it all’ tied as the second most important experience attributes. In 2005 Minnesota ATV riders participated in the activity about 26 times during the season, on average. Those who travel 100 miles or more for ATV riding, do so about 11 times a season” (page 6). The study found that, “Minnesota’s ATV riders used their ATVs in various activities, but primarily for recreation, work, and hunting” (page 34). It is important to note that data from the

study encompasses information on ORV users from across Minnesota and is not specific to the counties in the project area; however, the findings in the statewide study are generally consistent with ATV users in Beltrami, Cass, and Itasca Counties.

<http://www.tourism.umn.edu/research/ATVExecutiveSummary.pdf>

In summary, visitors to the CNF participate in a variety of activities that utilize most of the forest. Forest access is perceived as playing an important role for visitors and resident to pursue activities, including ORV use of the CNF.

Economic Assessment

The economic assessment is tiered to the Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Economics were analyzed in the FEIS and is included by reference (page 3.9-1 to 3.9-25). To summarize the FEIS, the CNF provides direct and indirect multiple economic benefits to Minnesota and surrounding states, and especially to individuals and communities within the north-central region. Economic benefits contributed to the region by National Forest lands include market and non-market opportunities such as timber volume, tourism, balsam boughs, sightseeing, and fishing. There are a number of National Forest programs, such as the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes, and the 25 Percent Fund Payments, that contribute to the regional economy.

Recreation and Tourism on the Chippewa National Forest

According to the FEIS, outdoor recreation, travel and tourism provide an important contribution to northern Minnesota's regional economy. Tourism has historically been and remains an important part of the area's economy, and figures are available to measure market values to an area. Tourism is defined by the United Nations Statistics Commission, "As any person traveling to a place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year". This definition applies to economic activity that stems from both business and vacation purposes regardless of the duration of the trip, as long as it is less than 1 year. Likewise, this definition does not distinguish between a non-resident visitor and a resident visitor (Superior NF Social Assessment [ARDC 2002]) Table 3 indicates the estimated economic impact of domestic travel to the north-central counties associated with the CNF. <http://www.ardc.org/library/>

A University of Minnesota study, referred to in the Superior NF Social Assessment (ARDC 2002), concluded that it is hard to determine what part of tourism can be attributed to the natural amenities offered in the National Forest area, as compared to developed attractions such as golf courses and downhill ski areas. However, National Forest settings and activities tied to the aesthetic qualities of, the abundance of, and increased opportunities to experience wildlife, lakes and rivers, and large undeveloped forested areas are an important draw to visitors (Superior NF Social Assessment [ARDC 2002]).

Table 3. Domestic travel table

Estimated Economic Impact of Domestic Travel to North-central Counties Associated with the Chippewa National Forest			
County	Employment	Wages/Salaries (billion \$)	Gross Receipts (billion \$)
Beltrami	1,207	0.079	0.064
Cass	2,169	0.045	0.114
Itasca	1,727	0.036	0.091
<i>Source: FEIS</i>			

Research has been completed recently on the CNF regarding the number of visitors to the forest; how important the National Forest is to the trip; and expenditures of the visitors (Chippewa National Forest, National Visitor Use Monitoring Report [USDA Forest Service 2001]). The CNF received 2.1 million visits in 2001. A National Forest visit is the entry of one person upon a national forest to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. Of the visitors surveyed, 25 percent were asked about the primary destination of their recreation trip, and approximately 89 percent of these people indicated that the National Forests were their primary trip destination.

In a typical year, visitors to the CNF spend approximately \$1,900 per person on all outdoor recreation activities including equipment, recreation trips, memberships, and licenses. These same people estimated the amount of money spent within the group of people they were traveling with (or if alone, themselves), within a 50-mile radius of the recreation site at which they were interviewed during their recreational trip to the area, and they estimated approximately \$152.00 per person (Spending Profiles of National Forest Visitors 2001, Chippewa National Forest, National Visitor Use Monitoring Report [USDA Forest Service 2001]).

Minnesota ORV Economic Impacts

In March 2006, the University of Minnesota All-terrain Vehicles in Minnesota: Economic Impact and Consumer Profile was published (see previous weblink). It is the first study of its kind for Minnesota, and the fourth in United States. While the University of Minnesota Study encompasses information on ATV users from across Minnesota, the findings in study are generally consistent with ATV users in Beltrami, Cass and Itasca Counties.

According to the study, ATV riders in Minnesota spend \$641.9 million in direct ORV-related expenses (gear, ATVs, trailers, parts, groceries and other items) and \$572.1 million in residential travel expenditures. The economic impacts of resident expenditures contributed to total of 14,449 jobs across the state (8,756 general service, 1,477 retail related, and 4,216 manufacturing jobs). Combining the resident expenditures, retail activity, and manufacturing, a total of \$429 million was generated for wages and salaries, \$920 million for the gross state product or value added, and \$86 million in State and local tax revenues. The study states that, "For resident direct expenditures, the average household spent about \$172 per riding experience, which includes spending by riders on day trips and those including nights on their trip. This spending is equivalent to \$43 per person per day" (because respondents stated that there was an average of four people per riding group) (page 4).

In summary, the CNF provides multiple benefits to the region's economy. Recreation and tourism, including ORV riding, account for a portion of the economic impact for north-central Minnesota communities.

The following section will detail the two issues associated with the social and economic aspects with the Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project.

Issue 1: Provide more connections for loop and longer day recreation experiences (Indicator)

Over the past several years there has been a substantial increase in the number and capabilities of ORVs that are being sold across Minnesota and throughout the nation. Individuals are purchasing ORVs to pursue a variety of recreational activities, or expand their current recreational pursuits such as hunting, fishing, trapping, forest access, or general recreation riding. Some ORV users want routes that provide connections to destinations and loop riding opportunities to avoid the need to trailer their ORVs to new riding areas.

Following this increase in ORV use is the opportunity for economic benefits for rural communities in the form of providing services such as gas, parts, repair service, groceries, restaurants, and lodging. By having connector routes and loop opportunities individuals and the business community feel they are able to accommodate this growing recreational activity.

It is important to note that in the 2001 Genereux OHV Study, Minnesota riders stated that they desire rides that are approximately 20 miles in length, and an average riding times of 4 hours. Given the intermixed ownership on the CNF, and the fragment layout of system roads, it is difficult to provide an independent 20 miles system on Federal land. However, by using a series of designated roads and constructed ORV trails, longer riding opportunities may be achieved.

On the CNF there are currently approximately 58 miles of Forest Service System roads that provide riding experiences that are greater than 5.0 miles in length. Additionally, some OML 3, 4, and 5 roads will be proposed open to ORV use and analyzed through a mixed use analysis. Through public scoping individuals identified the communities of Big Fork, Remer, and the Lake Winnibigoshish area as locations for increases in connector routes and loop riding opportunities.

The indicator for connections and loop riding opportunities will be miles of Forest Service System roads open to ORV use that are greater than 5.0 miles in length, and miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads open to ORV use.

Issue 7: Funding (Indicator)

The CNF receives a finite allocation of Federal funds to maintain the 2,528 miles of Forest Service System roads, and perform law enforcement activities associated with ORV use. During public scoping, many people expressed a belief that the amount of funding the forest receives has decreased in the recent past and that there will not be enough funding available to manage the road system to required standards. This includes the maintenance of system roads for activities such as mowing, brushing, grading, and graveling, and ORV law enforcement costs.

Road Maintenance

For FY06 the CNF spent approximately \$117,480 to maintain 356 miles of National Forest System roads (see Transportation Specialist Report). This funding was focused on maintenance of OML 3, 4, and 5 level roads. In FY06 there was no maintenance performed on OML 1 or 2 level roads.

For the purpose of this analysis general unit costs data will be displayed for annual road maintenance. Road maintenance standards vary depending on the prescribed OML for a specific road. Costs for maintaining an OML 3, 4, or 5 roads are projected at \$330 mile, and approximately \$247 per mile for OML 1 and 2 roads (communication with Millie Baird, Transportation Planner and Ed Schmidt, Civil Engineer). These are general costs estimates generated to compare the differences in alternatives and not to exactly measure site-specific maintenance costs. Table 4 cost projections are based on annual maintenance on National Forest System roads currently open to ORV use on the CNF.

Table 4. Projected annual maintenance costs for roads open to ORV use

Objective Maintenance Level	Total Miles	Projected Annual Maintenance Costs
OML 1	0	\$0
OML 2	1,530	\$377,910
OML 3	0	\$0
OML 4	0	\$0
OML 5	0	\$0
Total	1,530	\$377,910

ORV Law Enforcement

One area of concern mentioned during public scoping was law enforcement and if funding would be sufficient to adequately patrol roads, issue citations to people riding illegally, and therefore protect resources. Currently on the CNF there are two full-time law enforcement officers, and approximately 25 forest protection officers. It is important to note that the CNF has cooperative law enforcement agreements with Beltrami, Cass, and Itasca Counties Sheriff's Departments, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Conservation Officers, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource Conservation Officers. These agreements authorized each agency to conduct law enforcement activities, including ORV enforcement on the CNF.

In FY06 the CNF spent approximately \$39,011 for law enforcement activities associated with ORV management. This included activities such as field contacts, education, issuing citations, and monitoring. This figure was calculated using actual FY 2006 reported ORV enforcement time for two full-time law enforcement officers (\$19,328) and estimates for the 25 forest protection officers (\$19,683). Estimates for the forest protection officers were calculated at ½ day per month for a nine month period during the riding season.

For the purpose of this analysis, law enforcement costs have been projected to fully implement ORV law enforcement for each alternative. Projections were based on consultation with the Forest Service Law Enforcement division (Kent Lederman, Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer). To fully implement the no-action alternative, ORV law enforcement costs are projected at \$73,648. Again, these are general costs projections generated to compare the differences in alternatives and not as an exact measure of site-specific ORV law enforcement costs.

The indicators for this issue (funding) will be projected annual maintenance costs for National Forest System roads, and projected Forest Service ORV law enforcement costs for each alternative.

Desired Condition

The 2004 Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan prescribe the following desired future conditions and objectives that are applicable for the Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project. The project is projected to be implemented January 2008 with the publishing of the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM will be reviewed annually with updates as needed to respond to changing conditions and to achieve the desired future conditions set for in the forest plan.

D-SE-1: The Forest provides commodity resources in an environmentally sustainable and acceptable manner to contribute to the social and economic sustainability and diversity of local communities.

D-SE-2: The Forest provides non-commodity opportunities in an environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable manner to contribute to social sustainability and vitality of local resident's way of life, cultural integrity, and social cohesion.

D-SE-3: The Forest continues to provide rare or unique benefits that may not be common on or available from other public or private lands, such as opportunities for experiencing solitude in remote settings, recreating where lakeshores are undeveloped, harvesting unique natural resources, and providing habitat for some Federal and/or State endangered, threatened, or sensitive species.

D-SE-4: The Forest continues to emphasize agency, tribal, and public involvement with increases in inter-governmental coordination with Federal, state, county governments and agencies; a high level of communication and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders; and successful dialogue between Tribal governments and Chippewa National Forest officials.

Objectives

O-SE-1: Contribute to local-scale social and economic vitality by promoting and/or protecting area cultural values, traditional employment, recreation opportunities, historical landscape features, commodity related natural resources, and aesthetic qualities of the forest.

O-SE-2: An annual and sustainable program of commercial timber sales and other products are offered and/or available.

O-SE-3: Increase accessibility to a diversity of people and members of underserved and low-income populations to the full range of uses, values, products, and services.

O-SE-4: Improve delivery of services to urban communities.

Overview of the Proposed Action

The CNF proposes to identify the Forest Service system roads that ORVs may be operated on legally. Public motor vehicle use will be allowed only on the CNF roads on National Forest land designated in this project after the MVUM is published. Once road designation is completed and the MVUM is published, motor vehicle use on roads not designated through this project is prohibited (see 36 CFR Part 212 Sec. 50).

This project only addresses Forest Service System roads; it does not address forest system trails nor over-snow vehicles. The project area is located across the entire CNF. This action is needed to move the existing condition towards the goals (Forest Plan, pages 2-4), objectives (Forest Plan O-

ORV-1, page 2-42), and desired conditions (Forest Plan, D-ORV-1, page 2-42) for off highway vehicle use on designated roads in the CNF and to meet the requirements of the 2005 Travel Management Rule.

The proposed action (Alternative 2) presents an interdisciplinary, public involvement-based, ORV travel management solution for the CNF. The proposed action includes roads that were analyzed against a series of resource data layers with a GIS database and discussed with other land management agencies, such as the Minnesota Department of Natural resources (DNR), the counties and townships with roads crossing the CNF, and the public at several workshops. Table 5 show miles of roads proposed open by OML.

Table 5. Summary of miles of roads proposed open to ORVs

Objective Maintenance Level Roads	Miles of Forest Service System Roads Proposed Open to ORVs
1	0
2	1,166
3	83
4	133
5	0
Total	1,384

Mitigation

There are no site-specific mitigation measures for the social and economic assessment that apply to the project.

Monitoring

The LRMP prescribes the following monitoring questions to answer, and measurement and reporting requirements for social and economic sustainability (page 4-11). There are no additional monitoring requirements proposed for this project:

1. To what extent does the Forest provide commodity resources and non commodity opportunities in an environmentally acceptable manner that contributes to the social and economic sustainability and diversity of local communities?
 - a. Forest Plan Reference: D-SE-1 and 2. . O-SE-1.O-SE-3, O-SE-4,O-SU-2, O-SU-3, O-SU-4, O-SU-5.
 - b. Measurement Frequency - 5 Years.
 - c. Evaluation/Reporting Frequency - 5 Years.
2. Are forest management activities maintaining the desired characteristics of the areas and species of interest (traditionally and culturally) as identified in research and/or by interested communities and individuals?
 - a. Forest Plan Reference: D-SE-3.
 - b. Measurement Frequency – 1-5 Years.

c. Evaluation/Reporting Frequency – 1-5 Years.

Environmental Consequences

The environmental consequences section will disclose direct, indirect, and cumulative effects for the social and economic aspect of the project. Direct and indirect effects will be displayed for each alternative, and cumulative effects will be combined at the end of this section. Table 6 compares social and economic indicators by alternative.

Table 6. Social and economic indicators for all alternatives

Social and Economic Indicators	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Miles of Forest Service System roads open to ORV use that are connected to each other and greater than 5.0 miles in length	58	244	179	279
Miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 system roads proposed open through the mixed use analysis	0	217	186	294
Projected annual maintenance costs (\$) on system roads designated open to ORV use	\$379,371	\$332,724	\$225,202	\$282,562
Projected annual Forest Service ORV law enforcement costs (\$)	\$73,648	\$102,598	\$144,73	\$113,137

Alternative 1 - No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no-action alternative there are approximately 58 miles of connector and loop riding opportunities along designated Forest Service System roads. The Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan (G-RMV-1) generally prohibits ORV use on OML 3, 4, and 5 roads. In the no-action alternative there are 468 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads that would not be open for ORV use. Approximately \$379,371 would be required for annual maintenance of National Forest system roads including mowing, grading, brushing, and graveling. A total of \$73,648 is projected for ORV law enforcement (see Table 6).

The no-action alternative would maintain current levels of ORV motorized recreational opportunities across the CNF. This alternative would provide the least amount of connector/loop miles designated open for general ORV riding, as compared to the other three action alternatives. ORV use would be prohibited on the 468 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads; therefore, ORV users would need trailer their ORV to new riding locations on OML 2 roads designated as open. This would reduce the opportunity for loop connections, longer riding experiences, create confusion on the part of the users, and fragment ORV opportunities on the CNF.

Implementing the no-action alternative would cost an estimated \$453,019 for annual road maintenance (\$379,371) and ORV law enforcement (\$73,648).

Under the no-action alternative, no additional motorized recreation opportunities would be provided. Out of the four alternatives being analyzed in this document, the no-action alternative represents the greatest annual maintenance and ORV law enforcement costs, with the least amount of loop/connector routes available for longer days riding experiences.

The no-action alternative direct and indirect effects listed for the social and economic sustainability are consistent with the Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan and 2005 Travel Management Rule.

Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Implementing the proposed action would result in 244 miles of connector and loop riding opportunities along designated Forest Service System roads. ORV use is proposed for 217 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads. Approximately \$332,724 would be required for annual maintenance for mowing, grading, brushing, and graveling on National Forest System roads. A total of \$102,598 is projected for ORV law enforcement (see Table 6).

Indirectly, ORV riders would continue to have access to the forest for general recreation riding, trapping, fishing, hunting, and other associated activities. As a result of the mixed use analysis, 217 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads are proposed open for use as connectors to OML 2 roads open for ORV use. The choices of ORV users and the diversity of areas to access would be limited to designated open roads. Opportunities would exist for longer day riding and connections to larger systems.

Implementing the no-action alternative would cost an estimated \$435,322 for annual road maintenance (\$332,724) and ORV law enforcement (\$102,598).

Overall, the proposed action would increase miles of system roads available for connections and longer day riding, as compared to the no-action alternative, and provide for the second highest costs for annual road maintenance and ORV law enforcement proposed for the CNF.

The proposed action direct and indirect effects listed for the social and economic sustainability are consistent with the Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan and 2005 Travel Management Rule.

Alternative 3

Direct and Indirect Effects

Implementing Alternative 3 would result in 179 miles of connector and loop riding opportunities along designated Forest Service System roads. ORV use is proposed for 186 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads. Approximately \$225,202 would be required for annual maintenance for mowing, grading, brushing, and graveling on National Forest System roads. A total of \$144,753 is projected for ORV law enforcement (see Table 6).

Under Alternative 3 there would be a reduction of 65 miles of system roads designated open for ORV use that would be available for connector routes and loop riding opportunities, as compared to the proposed action. General recreational riders would have access on 186 miles OML 3, 4 and 5 roads designated open. The choices of ORV users and the diversity of areas to access would be limited to designated open roads. This would result in some concentration of use on roads designated open, however this use would not be predictable.

Implementing Alternative 3 would cost an estimated \$369,955 for annual road maintenance (\$225,202) and ORV law enforcement (\$144,753).

Alternative 3 would decrease the miles of system roads available for connections and longer day riding, as compared to the proposed action and Alternative 4, and provide for the lowest costs for annual road maintenance and ORV law enforcement proposed for the CNF.

The Alternative 3 direct and indirect effects listed for the social and economic sustainability are consistent with the Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan and 2005 Travel Management Rule.

Alternative 4

Direct and Indirect Effects

Implementing Alternative 4 would result in 279 miles of connector and loop riding opportunities along designated Forest Service System roads. ORV use is proposed for 294 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads. Approximately \$282,562 would be required for annual maintenance for mowing, grading, brushing, and graveling on National Forest System roads. A total of \$113,137 is projected for ORV law enforcement (see Table 6).

Indirectly, Alternative 4 would provide multiple opportunities for ORV users by incorporating loop riding/connectors on system roads, increased access during the fall hunting season, and mixed use on higher standard roads. Through the mixed use analysis, 294 miles of OML 3, 4, and 5 roads would be open to facilitate increased riding opportunities. ORV riders would continue to have access to the forest for general recreation riding, trapping, fishing, hunting, loop riding, and other associated activities. The choices of ORV users and the diversity of areas to access would be limited to designated roads open. ORV use on the forest would likely continue at current levels and increase over time following industry trends.

Implementing Alternative 4 would cost an estimated \$395,699 for annual road maintenance (\$282,562) and ORV law enforcement (\$113,137).

Overall, Alternative 4 would increase miles of system roads available for connections and longer day riding, as compared to the other action alternatives, and provide for the second lowest costs for annual road maintenance and ORV law enforcement proposed for the CNF.

The Alternative 4 direct and indirect effects listed for the social and economic sustainability are consistent with the Chippewa National Forest Land Resource Management Plan and 2005 Travel Management Rule.

Cumulative Effects for all Alternatives

Two significant management decisions within the past 5 years that have major implications to ORV use on the CNF include the 2004 Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), and 2005 Travel Management Rule. Both decisions direct forest managers to designate Forest Service System roads open or closed to motorized use, and if appropriate by time of year and type of use.

In addition to providing ORV direction, the LRMP made decisions regarding future travel access needs on National Forest System roads. As stated in O-TS-7, "Unneeded roads will be decommissioned and closed to motorized vehicles. Roads that are not necessary for long-term resource management are considered 'unneeded' (page 2-48). Additionally, O-TS-8 states, "The Forest will decommission approximately 200 miles of road" (page 2-48). Annually, the CNF proposes approximately 20 to 40 miles of road decommissioning in 2 to 3 vegetation

environmental assessments. At the time the Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project was initiated, all past road decommissioning decision were integrated with the proposed action. Future environmental assessments will continue to evaluate the forest transportation system and propose road decommissioning for unneeded system roads over the next 10 years.

As directed in the 2005 Travel Management Rule, the CNF will make future decisions regarding roads designated for ORV travel. The Forest is required to annually review, update, and publish the MVUM. Updates to the MVUM will reflect changes in resource conditions, and help move the Forest toward the desired future conditions identified in the forest plan.

Other decisions outside the scope of the Forest Service, but related to ORV use, include the classification of State Forests for the purposes of motorized access. The State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing plans to classify each of the seven State Forests, and scattered State Forest lands within and adjacent to the boundaries of the CNF. State Forest lands will be classified as closed, limited, or managed for motorized use. The DNR; Forest Service; Beltrami, Cass, and Itasca counties; LLBO; and township governments have collaborated in joint ORV planning for each agency. The DNR has proposed classifications for each of the seven State Forests and scattered State Forest lands (see Table 7). It is important to note that the proposed classifications are not final decisions, only proposals at this time. It is anticipated that DNR Commissioner will announce his final decisions for the seven State Forest classifications and scattered lands located within the project area in the summer of 2007.

The following link provides information on State DNR ORV programs:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/index.html>

Table 7. Proposed DNR State forest motorized access classification

State Forest	Proposed Classification
Battleground	Closed
Bigfork	Managed
Blackduck	Managed
Bowstring	Limited
Buena Vista	Limited
Remer	Limited
Welsh Lake	Closed
Scattered State Forest Lands within SE Beltrami County	Managed
Scattered State Forest Lands within Northern Cass County	Limited
Scattered State Forest Lands within NW Itasca County (except lands south of U.S. Highway 2 which are proposed for limited classification)	Managed

Source: Proposed Forest Classification and Forest Road and Trail Designations for State Forest Lands in and Near the Chippewa National Forest, Draft Proposal, p. 2.

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/ohv/designation/index.html>

Rationale for the proposed State Forest classification can be found on pages 9-13 of the draft Forest Classification and Forest Road and trail Designation (see web link above). Several variables were considered in the classification recommendations, such as percent public, private, and industry lands, recreation patterns, presence of communities, and special designations such as

wildlife management areas. In summary, there are 740 miles of inventoried routes on State Forest lands and 326 miles on County lands within the DNR's Chippewa Planning area.

The following table presents the DNR's recommendation for motorized access. Please see the DNR website for clarifications of terminology, acronyms, and numbers indicated.

Table 8. Proposed DNR State Forest Motorized Access Summary for the Chippewa Planning Area

Forest Road and Trail Designation Mileage Summary for State and County Land		
Route Designation	State Forest Land (miles)	County Forest Land (miles)
System Forest Road	12	3
Minimum Maintenance Forest Road	85	34
National Forest Road	41	29
Open to HLV & OHV	17	10
Mixed Use Analysis	22	13
Open to HLV/ Closed to ATV	0	0
Subtotal	80	52
Non-designated Routes	53	1
Proactive Closures	11	3
In <i>closed</i> forests	201	98
In <i>limited</i> forests	236	114
In <i>managed</i> forests	0	0
Subtotal	501	216
ATV Trail: Soo Line North	3	5
ATV Trail open to <1,000 pound vehicle	10	3
Subtotal	13	8
OHM Trail	0	0
ORV Trail	0	0
Non-motorized trails	49	13
TOTAL	740	326

Additional OHV Trails will be designated in a future collaborative planning effort involving the US Forest Service, DNR, and the counties.

Ultimately, the designation of the 740 miles of inventoried routes on State Forest lands will depend on the final classification that the DNR Commissioner will assign to each State Forest and scattered lands.

Given the scope of the Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project, as identified in the purpose and need, cumulative effects are limited to total miles of roads designed open for ORV use for connector and loop riding opportunities within the boundary of the CNF. Given the intermixed land ownership on the forest—and since the DNR has not made final decisions on State Forest classifications—there is not enough information available, such as specific miles of roads open and closed for motor vehicle use, to conduct an accurate cumulative effects analysis for ORV use for connector and loop riding opportunities within the project area.

Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction

All action alternatives involve the ten management areas on the CNF. All action alternatives comply with the Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, and 2005 Travel Management Rule for motorized use.

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http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/chippewa/projects/forest_plan/index.php

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